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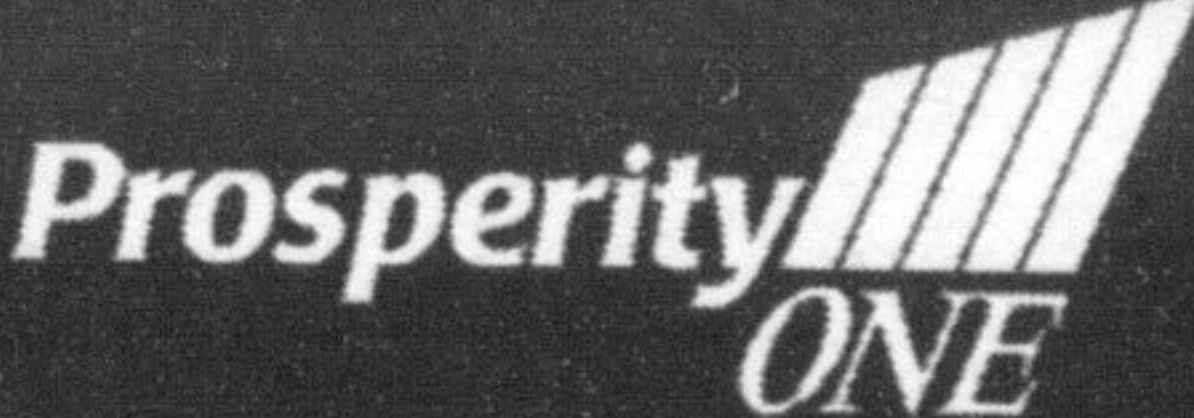
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MILTON CHAMBER of COMMERCE



President's Message *Melissa De Brouwer*

As you know, in 2002 the Milton Chamber of Commerce lobbied hard against Halton Region increasing development charges in 2003. Despite consultations and presentations before the Region, Council voted in favour of phasing in increases in Halton's development charges over 2003 and 2004. As a result, Milton, Burlington, Oakville, and Halton Hills now have the highest development charges in all of the GTA. DC's are the fees levied against new developments to cover the one time costs of expanding infrastructure — things such as parks, roads, and waste water treatment facilities. Obviously, the current tax base cannot be asked to pay for all of those costs. However, there is a tradeoff here. In order to have a healthy, vibrant community, we need industrial/commercial development. The reality is that residential taxes alone cannot cover the full cost of running our community. As our residential base grows, our business base needs to grow proportionately.

Every five years, all municipal and regional governments in Ontario review their policies on Development Charges, and 2003 is a review year. Both the Town of Milton and Halton Region will be reviewing their current DC policy and making decisions as to whether or not to increase DC's effective in 2004. Under current policy, developers pay almost 100% of the costs associated with their development. No other community in the GTA makes that demand. The Chamber will have representation on both the Town's and the Region's committees. We will make presentations to both councils in support of no further increases. It is the Chamber's position that the current policy is short sighted. By attempting to cover the cost of development up front, the Town and Region are going to lose out on at least some potential development, and therefore lose out on the much more lucrative and necessary ongoing tax revenues that an expanded industrial/commercial base will generate over the next 25-50 years. Our residential base is growing more rapidly than anticipated. If the expansion of our business tax base does not keep up, both residential owners and businesses will see property taxes increase to cover the rising operating costs of a larger community.

It is our best hope that other communities in Ontario will increase their development charges after this review, while Milton and Halton remain at current levels, thereby making Milton and the rest of Halton more competitive and attractive to potential commercial/industrial developers going forward. Of course, that assumes that Ontario remains competitive with the other provinces and the rest of North America.

My thanks to Carol McDonald and the Government Relations committee for staying on top of this issue, as well as their continued efforts on behalf of the business community.

RENEWAL MEMBERSHIPS

Thank you to the following members for renewing their Chamber membership.

1846 Log House Craft Gallery	Martindale Gardens / MMCR
Appliance Depot	McMarketing Inc.
Baskets & Botanicals	Mohawk Inn & Conference Centre
Bick Financial Securities Corporation	Mohawk Racetrack Slots
Brancier Jeweller-Gemologist	Nassagewaya Country News
C.M. Morris Design Limited	Phillips, Dr. David
Clem's Painting	Prosperity One - Community Banking & Financial Services
Cogeco Cable Inc./Cogeco 14	RBC Royal Bank - Business Banking
Copar Marketing Inc.	Swisscan Properties
CosySoles Slippers	Tim Hortons
D & S Signs	True Health Chiropractic
Enterprise Centre, The	Willowbrook Bed and Breakfast
Frank Cutrara Productions	
Halton Agricultural Society	
Hornby Glen Golf Course Inc.	
James Snow State Farm Insurance	

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

COMMUNITY AWARDS GALA
 Saturday, April 12, 2003 at
Granite Ridge Golf Club

Make plans to attend and acknowledge and honour those who have made an impact, either personally or professionally, on you or your business over the past year. An Evening of Celebration and Honour — join us for a night to remember. Tickets on sale at the Chamber office.

BUSINESS AFTER HOURS
 Tuesday, March 25, 2003
 5:00 pm — 7:00 pm
Halton Region Museum / Allison's of Milton
 (held at Halton Region Museum — Kelso Conservation Area)
 Join us for an evening of networking and knoshing on great food while discovering the treasures of Escarpment Country!

Tuesday, April 22, 2003
 5:00 pm — 7:00 pm
Hitherfield Preparatory School
 2439 — 10th Sideroad, Campbellville
 The three R's will take on a whole new meaning at Hitherfield! Return to your school days and network with fellow Chamber members!



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